

**The Road Home: National Behavioral Health Conference on  
Returning Veterans and Their Families Conference**

**Help for Veterans and their Families  
through Civil Rights Laws, the Privacy  
Rule, and Disability-Related Federal  
Supports**

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# Impact of Disability

- In a recent Washington Post article it was reported that more than one in three soldiers and Marines who served in Iraq later sought help for mental health problems, according to a comprehensive snapshot by Army experts of men and women returning from the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and other places.
- Addressing the realities of benefit compensation at the same time as adjusting to the impact of a disability – be it physical, sensory, cognitive and/or emotional – is a difficult challenge for the Veteran and his/her family in making a smooth transition to civilian life.

# Impact of Disability

- It is not enough that follow-up care, rehabilitation and outreach services are provided.
- What is key is ensuring returning Veterans have the opportunity to participate in community life.
- Support for returning veterans must be provided for participation in all aspects of community life - education, employment, recreation, social, religious and other activities.

# Impact of Disability

- A major barrier is the impact of attitudes towards disability on the Veteran's self-image and on family members.
- Confronting attitudes necessitates the building of bridges between physical rehabilitation and social reintegration in order to utilize available **legal, governmental and community-based opportunities.**

# Legal and Governmental Opportunities

- The ADA, the Olmstead Decision and the President's New Freedom Initiative provide legal and governmental opportunities.
- The Olmstead Supreme Court decision is based on the Americans with Disabilities Act Title II Integration Mandate: "A public entity shall administer services, programs, and activities in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of qualified individuals with disabilities."

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# Legal and Governmental Opportunities

- The Supreme Court affirmed the right of individuals with disabilities to live in their community and requires states to provide community-based services rather than institutional placements for persons with disabilities.

# Legal and Governmental Opportunities

- President Bush articulated the following NFI goals to address the barriers to full community participation for all individuals with disabilities across the lifespan:
  - Integrate Americans with disabilities into the workforce;
  - Promote comprehensive array of community-based services and supports;
  - Promote safe, decent housing and homeownership;
  - Promote integration into and sustained participation in the workforce;
  - Increase access to assistive and universally designed technology;
  - Expand transportation options; and
  - Promote full access to community life.



# Community-Based Opportunities

- To help address community integration and identify the health and human services in the civilian community for Military in the field, Veterans and their families the Office on Disability with the U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center, Army Office of the Surgeon General, and the Department of Defense TRICARE Management Activity convened a joint meeting in April 2005.

# Community-Based Opportunities

- The meeting resulted in the identification of federal health and human resources within the civilian community and best entry points for accessing services.
- The listing of these resources is available in the provided handout entitled: **U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center**  
**U.S. Department of Health and Human Service (HHS).**

# Community-Based Opportunities

- The identified resources cover the needs of children, youth, adults and older adults with disabilities and those with special healthcare needs.
- Website addresses are provided to help obtain additional information.

# Contact Information



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